



Match Report

Opponent: United States Air Force Academy

Date: 8 OCT 05

First Match:	Navy 15	USAFA 0	B Side
Second Match:	Navy 12	USAFA 14	A Side

This weekend brought not only the first rain Annapolis had seen in a month, but also the Zoomie Rugby Team from Colorado Springs, Colorado. By the time the two sides took to the pitch, in some places it resembled a slip-n-slide more than an athletic field. None the less the game started with Navy moving against the wind. Air Force controlled the beginning of play but was unable to move much farther than the Navy 22 meter line. Play slowly moved its way back across midfield and Navy found a pattern of play heavy with forward runs off of their rucks. Navy failed to take advantage of numerous runs off of scrums by second-class 8-man Jeff Carlton; Navy often lacked support from the rest of the pack. Air Force meanwhile, chose not to kick much despite having a very strong wind at their backs. This strategy almost cost them as the Gold Shirts were successful in driving multiple line outs deep in Zoomie territory. The best scoring chance of the half came right at halftime as Navy had multiple phases within meters of try but the Zoomie defense stood tall. The half would end nil all.



The second half started with the Gold Shirts quickly on the offensive and in Air Force territory. The first points of the afternoon would come from second-class wing Chase Hobby. Hobby would knock through a penalty from 25 meters for a Navy 3, Air Force 0 score line. Navy kept the pressure up after the kick off and produced the first try of the match. The score was the result of successful back play which allowed second-class wing Adam Niznik to sprint up the touchline for five points. Hobby successfully converted (Navy 10, Air Force 0). Air Force needed a score and responded with multiple phases in Navy territory. However, the Navy backs were not afraid to use the wind at their back this half and kicked often to relieve pressure. With just ten minutes to go

Navy forwards scrapped to push the ball beyond the try-line for the last score of the game, no conversion (Navy 15, Air Force 0). The Zoomies would have a try called back for a forward pass and the match ended soon after.

In the second match, the main event of the evening, nationally ranked number 7, Air Force took on number 2, Navy. This match saw the opposite orientation as the first with Navy having the wind at their back to start. Though weather was tailor made for mudder forwards, the opening of this game saw much more backs play than the entire first match. This would lead to Air Forces first try as they broke through the Navy defense to sprint half the field for try right between the uprights. The conversion was good (Navy 0, Air Force 7). Jump started by the Air Force score, Navy pressured inside the Zoomies' 22-meter line with multiple phases. Air Force thought they had scored again, this time on a 80 meter run after an intercepted pass, but the play was negated by an offsidess call. Following another penalty inside the 22, third-class flanker Andrew Vagley put Navy on the board when he dove into the try zone after picking from a ruck five meters out. Miller's conversion was good (Navy 7, Air Force 7). The half would end with Navy reduced to 14 men as second class center Kevin Peterson was carded for stealing a pass from an offsidess position; a very unpopular call with the Navy supporters.

The man advantage would prove decisive early in the second half. From within the Navy 22, Air Force broke through the Gold midfield and again scored under the uprights, conversion good (Navy 7, Air Force 14). Navy responded on the back of senior captain and 8-man Jake Womble who powered across the try line after picking from a scrum, no conversion (Navy 12 Air Force 14). The last twenty minutes saw the game reach a fevered pitch as Navy pushed the Air Force defense and the Zoomies harassed the Gold Shirts with multiple counter attacks. Navy looked to take the lead with penalty kick from second-class fly half Rob Miller, but into the gusting wind it sailed ending up a foot right of the post from 27 meters. Despite multiple kicks and chases from senior scrum half Samuel "Mac" Marrone counters by senior fullback Eric McElvenny, the Blue and White stripped defense held. The final whistle came with play in front of the Navy fans, but it was the Zoomies who were celebrating a two point decision.

~ M. M. QUIN reporting